

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2002

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Adams
John Barnett
John Becton
Searcy Ewell
Lindi Johnson
Nola McKinney
Maria Morais

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Pierre Curry
Jim Hill
Donna Hun

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

NONE

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Ramona Sangalli
Buddy Spivey

DHS Representative: Kurt Knickrehm

Attorney General's Office Representative: None

DSB Staff Present: Jim Hudson, Katy Morris, Coral Virden, Carolyn Holbrook, Charlie Cain, Richard Behra, Linda Paxton, Jim Pearson

CALL TO ORDER. Board Chairman, Mrs. Lindi Johnson called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Chairman Johnson proposed two amendments to the agenda, moving the issue of AASIS Access to be considered immediately after the Director's Report, followed by the presentation by Mr. Rob Hammons of the Board of Election Commissioners. Mrs. Nola McKinney made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Searcy Ewell seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

INTRODUCTIONS. Persons in attendance introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF THE 06/08/02 MINUTES. Motion was made by Mr. John Barnett and seconded by Mr. Searcy Ewell to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2002 Board Meeting. ***Motion passed.***

DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT-The National Federation of the Blind Convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky in early July. Major issues were the education of blind children in public schools and residential settings, particularly the development of effective individual education plans. A highlight of the Convention was the participation of RSA Commissioner JoAnne Wilson, who spoke on the involvement of rehabilitation in the Workforce Development initiative around the country. Ms. Wilson is seeking data to determine how effective Workforce Development is in serving blind and disabled persons throughout the states.

The American Council of the Blind Convention was also held in July in Houston, Texas.

A report on the ACB conference will follow later in the meeting.

The Arkansas Older Blind population has increased dramatically each year without a corresponding increase in either state or federal revenue. Because existing DSB general revenue is obligated to match the vocational rehabilitation program, the 2003 General Assembly is faced with the choice of funding a significant increase in the Older Blind program or facing a radical reduction in services.

Ticket-To-Work will start in Arkansas in November 2002. Consumers will obtain a ticket to acquire services toward completion of their rehabilitation plan. The first meeting involving training on Ticket-to-Work will be held in late September in Little Rock and throughout the state.

Tech Lab—The Tech Lab has moved to a permanent location at the Arkansas School for the Blind. The lab is located in the West wing of the building. Among others, individuals from Workforce Development have been trained in the operation of Jaws and other software.

DSB Board Member Jim Adams recently assembled a meeting among representatives of various universities in the state and other interested groups regarding the provision of braille and other alternatives to print to students in post-secondary education. An initiative was discussed regarding the possible development of a partnership between the programs and the prison system for production of braille and other alternatives. A recent Attorney General's Opinion which confirms the responsibility of post-secondary institutions to provide braille and other appropriate alternatives to students was also discussed.

JUMP START— The program was very successful this year, serving twenty seven students, six of whom were deaf-blind.

DSB and the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors held a very successful Annual Vendor's Seminar August 2–4, 2002. .

RSA Representative, Doug Lawton, conducted a Federal Review August 5–9, 2002. Mr.

Lawton reviewed cases statewide in areas of eligibility, individual work plans, types of jobs, number of homemakers, and other issues relative to the Rehab Act. The resulting report will be provided to DSB in the coming months.

Biennial Budget—The most significant budget request item is \$325,000 per year in state revenue for 2004 and 2005 for the Older Blind Program. Such funds will allow the program to continue services in response to the growing number of older blind persons in the state. The first legislative budget committee hearing on the DSB biennial budget will be held November 13, 2002.

END OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

AASIS ACCESS—The Board Chairman noted that she had submitted a letter to Governor Huckabee regarding the critical need for accessibility to AASIS by persons who are blind.

ELECTION ACCESS—Rob Hammons, Agency Coordinator for the State Board of Elections Commissioners, addressed the board regarding election accessibility for persons who are blind or severely visually impaired. The county election commission for each of the 75 counties is responsible for providing polling sites and ensuring the sites are ADA accessible for persons who are blind or visually impaired on election day. Any complaints with the polling sites must be addressed to the State Board of Election Commissioners at 1-800-411-6996. Mr. Rob Hammons can be reached at 501-682-1856 or www.state.ar.us/sbec.

ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AIRC) —Ms. Peggy Vickers, AIRC Director, spoke on the AIRC Creative Acceptance Panel. The panel will conduct accessibility workshops statewide for schools, city and county employees, banks, etc, and AIRC is seeking volunteers. Participants will be reimbursed 36.5 cents per mile for travel. Interested individuals may contact Ms. Vickers at the Arkansas Independent Living Council office at 501-372-0607 or 1-800-772-0607.

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER REPORT—Mr. Eddie Miller noted that the Center is focusing on Ticket-to-Work , which will affect SSI and SSDI recipients. The staff will assist consumers and advocate to get the information out, ensure that consumers understand they can work or attempt to work and receive benefits, and make sure their rights are not violated and they are treated fairly during the process. Interested individuals may contact the Disability Rights Center at 1-800-482-1174.

CONSUMER INPUT—Mr. Searcy Ewell encouraged consumers to vote at the local election Tuesday. A major issue is dedicated funding for transportation.

Mrs. Nola McKinney reported on the national ACB Convention held in Houston, Texas

in July. Major issues were the Rehabilitation Act and the Older Blind Program. Eighty-seven vendors were present demonstrating various conveniences such as accessible banking machines, sign scanners, voting machines, and accessible pedestrian signals. At the state level, ACB will award two—one thousand dollar scholarships this year. Please contact Mrs. McKinney to obtain an application. September 16, Mrs. McKinney will represent the Board by presenting employee plaques to the 2002 Outstanding DSB Employees at their statewide meeting in Hot Springs.

Disability Awareness Day at the State Capitol will be Wednesday, October 16, 2002, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Information and speakers will be available.

The National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas State Convention (NFBA) will be held October 25–27, 2002 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Job seeking skills training will be offered the afternoon of October 25.

Dena Lambert noted that the Arkansas Association of Blind Students (AABS), is working collaboratively with DSB, the Department of Education and Arkansas School for the Blind to present a weekend conference at the Arkansas School for the Blind, October 11–13, 2002. The conference is designed for students across the state who are 16 or older, enrolled in college or planning to attend college or other educational institutions. The students will discuss blindness issues. They are also seeking drivers for the conference.

It was requested and agreed that preliminary board packets be mailed to Board Members two weeks prior to the Board Meeting and that duplicate and additional information be provided at the meeting itself.

A discussion was held on the recruitment of trainees to replace vendors who are retiring. Chairman Johnson requested that Jim Pearson, manager of the Vending Facility Program address the Board at the December 14, 2002 meeting regarding recruitment issues.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next DSB Board meeting is scheduled at 10:00 a.m., December 14, 2002 in the Donaghey Plaza South building, First Floor, Conference Room A.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nola McKinney
Secretary